

Elected President of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention; spoken of for United States Senator.

- 1875: January 3: Enters upon temporary pastorate of First Baptist Church, Richmond; March 19, stepmother dies; July 3, sails for Europe for a year's absence.
- 1876: In Europe first half of the year; presented to Humbert and Christina.
- 1877: March 2: Political disabilities removed; March 3, offered a place in his Cabinet by President-elect Hayes; March 7, awarded premium on tract: "A Baptist Church Radically Different from Pedo-Baptist Churches"; March 13, visits old home at Talladega; July 31, August 1, visits Dr. Sears at Staunton; October 30–November 1, aids in entertaining President and Cabinet at Richmond.
- 1878: January 29: Famous speech in Mozart Hall, Richmond, on "Laws and Morals"; many speeches throughout the State on the pending issue of the State Debt.
- 1879: Other speeches on the State Debt; Professor and Religious and Social leader.
- 1880: March 23: Offered place as Visitor to West Point; May 5, sails for Europe; September 24, resumes duties at Richmond College; November 2, votes for Gen. Hancock.
- 1881: January 7: Daughter, Susan Lamar Turpin, dies; February 3, elected Peabody Agent; February 7, resigns professorship at Richmond College; June 23, elected a Trustee of Richmond College; given medal as Professor of Philosophy; October 5, first annual report to Peabody Trustees.
- 1882: Addresses Legislatures of South Carolina, West Virginia, and Mississippi.
- 1883: May 8: Lectures on Gladstone at Waco, Texas; May 14, 700 public school pupils call on him at his

hotel in Fort Worth; May and June, on a 9,000-mile trip to Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Yosemite Valley; December 18, calls on Matthew Arnold in Richmond and hears him lecture; December 19, visits two colored schools with Mr. Arnold.

- 1884: October 11: At the old home in Lincoln County, Georgia, where he was born.
- 1885: March 27: Offered head of Bureau of Education; September 23, accepted appointment as Minister to Spain; October 1, resigns presidency of Board of Trustees of Farmville Normal; October 9, calls on J. R. Lowell; November 5, sails for Spain; November 25, reaches Madrid.—Alfonso XII dies at 9 A.M. the same day.
- 1886: May 17: "Assists" at the birth of the new King.
- 1887: July 13: LL.D. from the University of Georgia; Armitage's History of the Baptists published, with Introduction by Curry.
- 1888: April: "The Acquisition of Florida," published in the American Magazine of History; August 6, resigns as Minister; August 20, resignation accepted "with regret"; September 23, lands at New York; October 3, after three years' suspension, re-elected Peabody Agent.
- 1889: "Constitutional Government in Spain"; "Establishment and Disestablishment."
- 1890: October 1, 2: Peabody Trustees hold annual Meeting in New York City; October 16, the Currys move to Washington City, and occupy their new home; October 30, chosen Slater Agent.
- 1891: October 7: Unanimously elected an Honorary Trustee on the Peabody Board; October 8, meeting of Educational Committee of the Slater Fund; publishes volume, "William Ewart Gladstone."
- 1892: October 17: Arranges for renewing Peabody Normal College Scholarships to Florida and Missis-

- issippi. Made a Trustee of Columbian University, Washington. (He held the position till his death.)
- 1893: April 25: Resigns Farmville Trusteeship; May 19, entertains the Infanta Eulalia et al. at Washington.
- 1894: October 4: Re-elected General Agent of the Peabody Board; November 21, attends funeral of Robert C. Winthrop; publishes "The Southern States of the American Union."
- 1895: January 11: Meeting of Slater Trustees in Washington; January 19, sails for Europe; June 1, returns; October 19-28, on Jury of Awards at the Atlanta Exposition.
- 1896: October 6: Special Committee of Peabody Trustees met to consider the expediency of terminating the Trust in February, 1897—Adverse decision; October 7, Curry re-elected General Agent.
- 1897: October 10: Attends funeral of Mrs. Mary W. Thomas, mother of Mrs. Curry; December 30, elected second president of the Southern History Association, to succeed Hon. William L. Wilson.
- 1898: April 21: Address on 30th anniversary of Hampton Institute; July 4, address at the University of Chicago, on the Principles, Acts, and Utterances of John C. Calhoun; publishes "Sketch of George Peabody and a History of the Peabody Education Fund."
- 1899: June 22: Address before the Education Conference at Capon Springs, West Virginia; December 21, invited to be Editor-in-Chief of a series of 10 historical volumes, to be issued by B. F. Johnson & Company.
- 1900: June 12: Address at the University of Virginia; June 27, address at Capon Springs; October 9, address at Tulane University.
- 1901: Publishes a "Civil History of the Government of

the Confederate States, with Some Personal Reminiscences." On June 15, delivers the Centennial Commencement Address at the University of Georgia.

1902: January 27: Elected a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of William and Mary; April 7, entitled "Ambassador Extraordinary" to Spain; April 19, sails for Spain; May 13, reaches Madrid; May 15, presents his Address to Alfonso; May 16, is decorated by the Royal Order of Charles III; May 17, attends the Coronation; May 22, leaves Madrid; August 2, lands at New York; October 1, last meeting with the Peabody Board; re-elected General Agent, and \$2,000 salary authorized for a Secretary; November 30 to December 2, last visit and address to the Peabody Normal College, at Nashville.

1903: February 12—Thursday: Dies at Fernihurst, Asheville, N. C.; February 15—Sunday: Buried in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond.

PREFACE

THE subject of this book left for the writer of his biography "an embarrassment of riches" in the voluminous mass of papers, journals and correspondence that constitute his unpublished literary estate; so that the difficulty of the present authors in dealing with this material has arisen rather in selection and co-ordination than from any other source.

Dr. Curry's mental attitude illustrated a singular and remarkable combination of the vision of the literary man, and the concrete activity of one who does things. Thus it came about that he not only achieved results, but he also found time to record his achievements. That he was accumulating material for the story of his well-spent life is not inconsistent with such a proper sense of modesty, as is rightly adorned by a just self-esteem. Just as it was clear to him at the time he began to keep these records that his life, if it should be spared to him, would be one of unusual opportunity and privilege, so in his later years he was of one mind with his venerable and distinguished associate in the Peabody Trust, Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, that their work in the administration of that trust was a conspicuously great and enduring public service.

He kept seven note-books and scrap-books, apart from the diary which he kept through many years; and in addition to diary and note-books, he preserved four volumes of letters and newspaper clip-

pings, together with many loose sheets and vagrant scraps of memoranda. His correspondence was extensive, and refutes the popular assertion that letter writing has been long a lost art.

Out of all this mass of documentary resource the writers of this biography have tried to select such material as would, with proper arrangement in the connecting narrative, furnish forth the environment, and illustrate the life and character of the man they sought to portray.

For invaluable assistance in this arduous and difficult task of selection, and in the co-ordination of the material so selected, their thanks are due and are here expressed to Dr. John Walter Wayland of the Woman's Normal School at Harrisonburg, Virginia. His service to the authors was one requiring patient energy and scholarly good sense, and he discharged that service with great accuracy and discretion.

J. L. M. CURRY
A BIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER I

"THE DARK CORNER"

THE vehement and freedom-loving personality of John Wilkes so greatly appealed to the patriotic Americans of the Revolutionary struggle that they gave the name of the eccentric Englishman, who had boldly espoused their cause, to three counties in the United States. One of these, Wilkes County, in the northeastern part of the State of Georgia, was subdivided in the year 1796, and one of its subdivisions received the more recently illustrious name of Lincoln, in memory of Benjamin Lincoln, a prominent general of the colonial forces in the war with the mother country.

Along the northeastern border of Lincoln County, and separating the county and state from the visible counties of Edgefield and Abbeville lying to the east of it, flows the Savannah River. Lincolnton, the county seat, lies near the centre of the county, whose southeastern extremity, wedged into the angle formed by the confluent Savannah and Little Rivers, came to be known in the early days of the country as "The Dark Corner."

There is nothing in frontier history more characteristic of the pioneer period than are many of the names, bestowed upon their homes by the incoming settlers. "The Dark Corner" was justified of its title. The Indian was there for a period, with the

antagonism of the conquered towards the conqueror. In a wild and unsettled country, without laws, or schools, or libraries, each man was a law unto himself. This general spirit of lawlessness, or lack of law, with its attendant characteristic of reliance upon physical strength and personal powers, affected the social existence of the inhabitants of "The Dark Corner" down into the earlier years of the nineteenth century; and in the first two decades of that century Lincoln County may be said to have been lacking both in the sobriety and the peacefulness of its population; while, as is commonly the case, the reputation, once acquired, long survived the facts which created it.

"Georgia Scenes," Judge Longstreet's volume of inimitable humor, written to illustrate and make palpable the earlier years of the nineteenth century in that state, has for its first chapter "The Lincoln Rehearsal," a title suggested in all probability by the county which held "The Dark Corner," where characters abounded like Ransy Sniffle, "whom nothing on earth so much delighted as a fight;" and where far into a higher civilization the conventional question, "a thousand times asked," was, "which is the best man, Billy Stallions (Stallings) or Bob Durham?" and was daily sought to be answered by wager of fistic battle. But, as is generally the case with simple people, free from the restraints of legal or social compulsion, these citizens and denizens of "The Dark Corner" had the virtues that accompany their faults. They were frank and genial in their hospitality, and generous in their dealings with both friend and stranger. Their kinship to nature was close; and, if their passions were elemental,

their characters took on a certain aspect of nobility in their truthfulness, their generosity, their courage, and their hardihood. The heroic drama of our national expansion was then just getting under way. The conquest of the land of a virgin continent, now ended, was then beginning. This region was the West—a spiritual and idealistic as well as a geographical term, for wherever new peoples, new forces and new ideals are modifying old conditions—that land is the West.

Here, in the very heart of “The Dark Corner”—“right in the center,” he writes of it—ere the sunlight of a later civilization had lifted the shadows—was born on Sunday, June 5, 1825, Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry.

Jabez was a name that ought never to have been bestowed, save with a full sense of the responsibility incurred by the giver in its bestowal. It may have been that it was conferred with some subtle and indefinable prescience on the part of the giver that the bearer of it was to witness and to help toward the healings of the distress of his people; for Jabez is, by interpretation of the Hebrew, “sorrow, or trouble;” or else his parents, with some like unconscious anticipation, may have beheld the greatness of their son’s future, and named him for him of old, who “was more honourable than his brethren; and his mother called him Jabez;” or, as is more probable, his parents received their chief inspirations and enthusiasms from religion and politics, and poured a rather wholesale broadside of both upon the helpless babe.

Of his entire name, which as originally bestowed was even more than he himself could bear, he writes

in his "Diary," with a certain feeling that is not altogether destitute of impatience:—

The Jabez is an honored Bible name, and was borne by Jabez Marshall, a popular Baptist preacher in Georgia; and by Jabez Curry, who died in Perry County, Alabama, in 1873—a favorite nephew of my father. Lafayette was the nation's guest when I was born, and my father, in token of gratitude to the friend of Washington, saddled me with the name; but I threw it aside and substituted Lamar. Monroe was President in 1825; so I had to take that burden also. I know no good from my long name, but not a little inconvenience.

The sympathy of the reader must go out to the writer of the above poignant paragraph; and a lesson to pious or patriotic or thoughtless parents may be found in the reflection that a far more befitting name, for the great educational figure of his time, would have been Lamar Curry.

The early boyhood of Jabez was made familiar with many "Georgia Scenes" surpassing in eccentricity and outlawry even those of which the storyteller has made literature. He was a witness, as he tells us in the desultory pages of a journal which he kept in later years, of many hand-to-hand fights and fierce personal encounters. The spirit of the Revolution continued, long after its close, to dominate the section where he was born, a hill country, into which through the generations had fled those who sought escape from bondage or crime, or who desired a larger freedom of thought and action than prevailed in the more civilized parts of the new Republic; and "Tory" was, even in Curry's boyhood, a term of opprobrium, quiet submission to which carried with it the stigma of cowardice. Out

of “The Dark Corner,” and from other parts of the county, the lad was wont to see gathered at stated intervals its citizen soldiery to the militia musters—a period while they lasted, of unrestrained festivity rather than of military restriction; and thither, too, on important occasions, when a representative in the legislature or in the Federal Congress, or a governor or other high state official was to be chosen, came the freeholders to cast their votes *viva voce* in the presence of the sheriff and the election officers, and to be thanked by the candidate who received them. No less in the infrequent sessions of the courts of that earlier period was illustrated the primitive and natural wildness of country and people. A striking story is told in the autobiography of a prominent man who flourished in an adjoining state, which serves to emphasize the state of society then prevalent throughout that section.

“Pushmatahaw, a Choctaw chief,” says the relator, who when a very young man, and a new comer to the county in which the incident occurred, had just been made prosecuting attorney, “had killed one of his subjects. In doing this, he acted under his tribal authority, and was so far justifiable. But under our law, which had been extended over all the territory conveyed by the Indians to the general government, the execution became murder. Pushmatahaw exercised great control and influence over his tribe.

“He had in some way incurred the hatred of the land companies organized to purchase reservations. It was important to them that he should be got out of the way; and to this end they employed a number of able attorneys to aid me in the prosecution. To avoid censure, it was determined that there should be only one speaker.

“The grand jury of Kemper County reported a bill of

indictment, and all the requisite preliminaries were performed by me preparatory to an early trial. I was notified that Mr. Samuel J. Gholson would aid me in the argument of the case before the jury.

"The defence had secured the services of some of the ablest lawyers in the state from Vicksburg and Jackson. A day for trial had been appointed, and witnesses summoned. I had, soon after my arrival in DeKalb, the county seat of Kemper, been introduced to a young Virginian, who had lately come there to practise law, and who made from the first a marked impression on me. This was Joseph G. Baldwin, afterwards so widely known both as a lawyer and a literary man. Two days before the trial he came to me, and requested to be allowed to take part in the argument, as it might lead to future success if he appeared in a case of so much interest. This I consented to do, and carried my point against great opposition from my colleagues. The testimony was soon ended. All the facts were against the defendant, and the *corpus delicti* was clearly shown. It was necessary to put the defence entirely upon tribal authority.

"The argument was opened for the State by Gholson in a characteristic speech. When Mr. Joe Baldwin arose, he was at first listened to with such slight curiosity and general indifference as might be expected for a very young man, entirely unknown to his audience. In a few moments this was changed to absorbing interest and attention. His speech was marked by the clearest and most convincing logic, rising at times into vivid oratory. It was evident that this modest young man, though yet to fortune and to fame unknown, was destined to take no obscure place in his day and generation.

"Other arguments were made, and the case was submitted to the jury. After short deliberation a verdict of guilty was rendered. The defendant was informed of the result, and that he would be hung. He was shocked at the mode of death, and made pathetic appeals against such an

indignity, claiming his right to die like a warrior. The court had no power to interfere, and sentence was pronounced according to the prescribed forms of our law. When this was done, Pushmatahaw rose to his full height, and gave vent to a wild war-whoop, so full of rage and despair that it was terrible to hear. As there were many Indians present, there was for a time danger of attempted rescue.

“Application for pardon was made to the governor, and the chief had strong hope that it would be granted. A few days before that appointed for the execution, he was informed that the governor had refused the pardon, and that he must die what he considered the death of a dog. This communication was made to the unhappy chief in cold-blooded and inhuman malice, and the result came near proving fatal. Pushmatahaw broke a bottle which chanced to be in his cell, and with a piece of the glass severed an artery in his left arm. He would have died in a short time from loss of blood, if the sheriff had not made an accidental visit to the prisoner. A pardon was granted and sent to the sheriff by an express, in time to save the life of the Choctaw chief.”

“It’s a far cry to Lochaw,” was the boast of the Scotch Campbell, whose broad lands extended over so large a space of the Highlands. It seems “a farther cry” in point of time from the year 1835, when Jabez Curry was a boy ten years old in “The Dark Corner,” and Reuben Davis, later judge of the High Court of Appeals, colonel in the war with Mexico, member of Congress, and Confederate brigadier general, was prosecuting the Indian chief, Pushmatahaw, with the assistance of the beardless Joe Baldwin, later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California, who was destined to leave a larger fame than is left by the most eminent lawyers, in his “Flush

Times" and "Party Leaders,"—down to the first decade in the twentieth century, when Curry represented the government of the United States as its special ambassador at the coronation of the present King of Spain, in the administration of Theodore Roosevelt.

The Currys were of Scotch origin; and in Scotland the name seems to have had the earlier spelling of Currie. In one of the will-books of Lincoln County was recorded on March 2, 1827, the will of Thomas Curry. By this testamentary instrument the maker of it appointed two of his sons, James and William, his executors; and to William he devised the old home-place in "The Dark Corner," whereon was located the family graveyard. William Curry was the father of Jabez; and his mother was Susan Winn, whom William Curry married in Lincoln County on January 5, 1823. These Winns are said to have been of Welsh extraction; and in any event the names both of Currie and Winn indicate a purely British origin, and illustrate in conjunction with the names, still surviving there, of the people of that section, the theory of Prof. Nathaniel S. Shaler, in his "Nature and Man in America," that nowhere in the western world, down to the beginning of the War between the States in 1861, did the unadulterated strain of descent from the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland so prevail as in a radius of three or four hundred miles of the East Tennessee Mountains. Both of these names are still to be found, as of great antiquity, upon the pages of records that hold the pedigrees of the county families of the United Kingdom. Curry records in one of his note books the fact that a General Winn, after whom Winnsboro,

in South Carolina, was named, was an officer of considerable local distinction in the Revolutionary Army; and that later he was for many years a representative in the United States Congress, where he was a colleague of Mr. Calhoun, and voted for the War of 1812. The Welsh Winns were connected with the French Lamars, and the Scotch Currys with the English Walkers; so that Curry might well say of himself: “I can hardly call myself an Anglo-Saxon, as in my veins flow English blood, Scotch, Welsh, and French.” Yet, after all, he was, save for the touch of Gallic infusion, a typical product of the British races, which gave a character and distinctiveness to the earlier colonial settlers of the Atlantic seaboard, that was transmitted untainted to their descendants who later pressed forward into the Southern and Southwestern States. Curry, however, with the real democratic spirit, typical of the men of the Revolutionary period, and of the two generations which succeeded, laid no claim to an aristocratic origin, however much he might have found himself by research entitled to it. It was sufficient to him always to know that he was an American; and his Americanism was consistently of so broad and catholic a type as to include within its comprehension every section and every citizen of his country.

Before Jabez Curry saw the light of day in “The Dark Corner” of Lincoln County, another child had been born to his parents. This was Jackson C. Curry, who was a man of sterling honesty and worth, and who spent his maturer years at Newbern, in North Carolina, where he was a deacon in the Baptist Church. With the courage and the patriotism of

the youth of his generation, when war reddened the horizon in 1861, Jackson Curry entered the Confederate Army, and died in the service at Demopolis, Alabama, in 1863, having achieved the rank of captain, and leaving to survive him two sons and three daughters.

One of Jabez Curry's earliest recollections, as he records it in his "Journal," was a faint and faded memory of his father's second marriage, which occurred September 4, 1829, when the boy was a little over four years old. His mother and an infant brother had died in 1827. With a wistfulness, that grows into pathos in its conclusion, he wrote of her, fifty years later, this paragraph:—

Of course I do not remember ever to have seen her. Very many persons have told me that she was exceedingly beautiful. It has been a source of sincerest regret that I was not trained in my youngest years by a loving mother. Delicate and susceptible, my life might have been different; but God knows best. I have a thousand times wished for her likeness; but in her day there were no daguerreotypes or photographs; and few persons had portraits painted.

Though thus lamenting, with the retrospection which took him back to earliest infancy, this deprivation of maternal tenderness and solicitude,—a loss which the most callous heart must of necessity regret,—he has not failed to record the kindness of his relations with his father's second wife, and his sense of indebtedness to her.

"My stepmother was a real mother to me," he writes, "and loved me as she did her own children. I gladly and gratefully bear this testimony to her faithfulness, kindness and love." - Digitized by Microsoft®

The second wife of William Curry was Mrs. Mary Remsen, a widow, who was born Murray, and whose father was a Revolutionary soldier. She was a woman of social prominence in her community; and her brother, the Honorable Thomas W. Murray, was a figure of more than local distinction, in whose honor one of the counties of the State was subsequently named. Of her first marriage had been born a son, David H. Remsen, who grew up in the household of William Curry as one of his own family, and was the playmate and associate, while he was treated as the brother, of Jackson and Jabez Curry. Of William Curry's second marriage were born Mark Shipp Curry, Thomas Curry, Walker Curry, and James A. Curry, of the latter of whom Dr. Curry writes in his diary under date of July 3, 1894, "My half-brother, James A. Curry, died in Anniston, Alabama." There seems to be no further record of the subsequent career of Mark Shipp Curry, the eldest of the half-brothers; but Thomas Curry was a soldier of the Confederacy, and became a captain in the Fifty-third Alabama regiment, and Walker Curry achieved eminence as a physician, and was a practitioner of his profession in New York City; while James A. Curry was a prominent man in the development of the mineral resources of Alabama. He was a pioneer in the iron business, and with Samuel Clabaugh in 1863 erected and operated a charcoal furnace in Talladega County. Prior to the breaking out of the War between the States, James A. Curry had been a merchant of large means in the town of Talladega; and he owned the lands on Salt Creek in that county on which his and Clabaugh's charcoal pig-iron furnace was erected, which was

destroyed by the Federal troops a year or two later.

William Curry, the father, was of the generation which succeeded that of the pioneers in Wilkes and Lincoln Counties; and this second generation inherited the moral fibre of their pioneer progenitors. Though the feud and the foray had not in his time altogether passed away, and the original "character" still lent variety and the not infrequent spice of excitement to the community in which he lived, these men of the Lower South of that period were not always, or even frequently, the whiskey-drinking, swaggering rowdies of revolver and bowie-knife, that caricature and libel have portrayed them.

"It is true," writes a competent chronicler of them and of their times, "that many of them drank hard, swore freely, and were utterly reckless of consequences when their passions were aroused. But it is equally true that the great body of them were sober, industrious men, who met hardships and toil with patient courage, and whose hands were as ready to extend help as they were to resist violence and oppression. They took life jovially, and enjoyed such pleasures as they could come by. Although a God-fearing people,—for infidelity was unknown,—there was nothing straight-laced about their religion. They attended divine worship in a reverent spirit and endeavored to do their duty to God and man, so far as they saw it. Even the strictest of them made no scruple about a social glass, or a lively dance, or a game of cards, or even of an honest hand to hand fight under due provocation."

This naïve depiction of a social existence in which the writer personally figured, continues:—

Their creed was generally simple. A man ought to fear God and mind his business. He should be respectful and courteous to all women; he should love his friends and hate

his enemies. He should eat when he was hungry, drink when he was thirsty, dance when he was merry, vote for the candidate he liked best, and knock down any man who questioned his right to these privileges. He was almost always an ardent politician, and a strong partisan on whichever side he enlisted. But a man would have been held in reprobation who should attempt to serve his party by fraud and corruption. There was no ballot-box stuffing.

If creed and custom were alike primitive, they were nevertheless manly and not insufficient; and their crudity emphasized an integrity that was the backbone of their social life.

Here in Lincoln County, amid such surroundings, and touched by such influences as have been narrated, William Curry lived, and his son Jabez spent his earlier years. History makes mention on its lesser pages of many names of the time and vicinity,—for the most part stout English and Scotch and Welsh names, with a touch of the Gallic. Among the first settlers of the county whose names are thus preserved in the local annals were Thomas Murray, the father of William Curry's second wife, Robert Walton, John Lockhart, B. Lockhart, Thomas Mitchell, Sterne Simmons, J. Stovall, Captain John Lamar, Stephen Handspiker, M. Henley, Robert Fleming, James Wallace and Peter Lamar. The two most prominent men of the county in William Curry's time appear to have been his brother-in-law, Thomas W. Murray, and Judge John M. Dooley, who like Murray also had the honor of having a county of the State named for him.

Of the Lamars, whose patronymic Curry sub-

stituted for that of La Fayette, which his father had patriotically bestowed upon him, and whose blood mingled with the other strains in his veins, the story of the South contains no little. The two most famous of the name and family, since their Huguenot ancestor first settled in the western world, was Mirabeau B. Lamar, orator, poet, soldier and statesman, compatriot of Sam Houston, Secretary of War of the Republic of Texas, the Commander-in-chief of its armies, its Vice-President, and for three years its President without opposition; and his no less distinguished nephew, Lucius Quintus Curtius Lamar, fitted out like his uncle and like his kinsman, Jabez Curry, with extraordinary names, after the apparent fashion of the times, who as Congressman, author of the Mississippi Ordinance of Secession, Lieutenant Colonel of the Nineteenth Mississippi regiment, Minister to Russia from the Confederate States, Secretary of the Interior and Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, touched nothing that he did not adorn.

The religious influences of the period in Lincoln County emanated from the ministers and members, for the most part, of two denominations,—the Methodists and Baptists,—whose missionaries have been from the earliest times in the rugged forefront of pioneer progress in America. The “hardshell” or primitive Baptist of that period was a mighty force in the development of young communities. Religion and æstheticism had not joined hands in that rough world. The preacher preached a simple, fearful creed, compounded strangely of tenderness and pitilessness, and lived an heroic unselfish life, and his doctrines and practices made such an impres-

sion upon the family of William Curry that all the culture and cosmopolitanism of the widest travel and experience could not wean his distinguished son from the faith of his early years.

When about four years old, Jabez Curry was sent to an “old field school” in “The Dark Corner,” where reading, writing and arithmetic were taught by one Joel Fleming, the master. The character and regimen of the homes of the vicinity were more or less primitive and simple. The furniture was plain and serviceable. The floors were generally bare of carpets or coverings. These primitive homes contained a population that has been generally described as having been “raised on pot-liquor, and fortified from early youth on jowl and greens, and buttermilk, and hog-meat smoked to the last turn, to say nothing of cornpone with reasonable gravy.” The schools, school-houses and schoolmasters matched the homes. The old field school-house, which the little boy attended, was built of logs, with the interstices daubed with clay. It was set in a woods, and was roofed with puncheons. There was but one door; and the shutter of the single unglazed window swung on creaking wooden hinges. The window itself was simply a hole in the wall, opposite the huge fireplace, made by cutting out a section of one of the logs. Alongside this narrow opening was a wide plank, fastened against the wall, which was used by the school-children as a writing desk. The first-formed letters of Jabez Curry, learned in the little log school-house in the Georgia woods, were made with a goose-quill pen, which was the exclusive instrument of writing,—the manufacture of which, no less than its use, was sedulously

taught by all well-minded teachers in the old field-schools. An accompaniment of the quill-pen was the sand-box, whose contents took the place of the more modern blotting-paper; and often master and pupils manufactured also the ink that they wrote with,—a writing fluid which must have been well-made, for the public records that are its monument are still clear and legible in a new century.

The “old field schools” were co-educational; and boys and girls went to school together. In warm weather, the larger boys were permitted to study their lessons outside the school-house, beneath the trees. There were no long vacations; but when a holiday was desired for any special occasion, the master was not over strenuous in resisting the request of the children. Sometimes a mild compulsion was resorted to by the children, when their holiday petition was rejected, and the master would be “barred out.” If the pedagogue resisted and made fight, the youngsters met force with force; and Curry has left among his papers a note in which he relates how, on one occasion, young though he was, he participated in one of these “lock-outs” against Mr. Fleming. The master seems to have been beloved by the children, but as, at the time of this episode, he proved recalcitrant when approached for a holiday, his affectionate pupils proceeded first to bar him out; and later, the larger boys bore the struggling pedagogue to the neighboring creek, and soused him into its shallow depths, while even the little Jabez waded into the stream, and with both small hands flung water on his preceptor, while the big boys held him down. It is recorded that the wise and simple master had taken advantage of the op-

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portunity, generously afforded him, prior to the “ducking,” to leave his tobacco-pouch on dry land; and that in recognition of the kindness of his adversaries in this respect, he took his enforced plunge with serene good humor. The holiday was gained; and the pedagogic function in due season resumed, with no apparent diminution or impairment of the usual discipline, and no intimation of diminished dignity.

It has been correctly said by an intelligent writer on the subject of elementary education at the South during this early period, that:—

The old academies of the South were many of them excellent schools, and in some respects have not yet been surpassed. The “old field” school was often good; but the whole arrangement was without adequate supervision, was expensive and uncertain, and did not reach many of our people. The percentage of illiteracy was high, and was not decreasing.

In the later 'forties the spirit of the great common school revival, which had been led by Horace Mann, began to influence the South; and in the early 'fifties the messages of the Southern governors contained many eloquent appeals for a state system of schools for all the children, and if war had not intervened, their appeals would have quickly taken form in a progressive system of public education.

Northern teachers were frequent in the Southern States, and especially young college graduates from New England, who migrated to the newly developing section of the country, with the idea of advancing their fortunes, sooner or later, in the professions of law and medicine, or by taking advantage of the many opportunities which the time and locality

offered. So it happened that young Curry's next teacher was a Mr. Vaughan, from Maine, who seems not to have possessed the equable temper and forgiving spirit of Mr. Fleming. He was a rigorous and severe disciplinarian, but is supposed to have been an excellent instructor.

"In 1833, the stars fell." This date of the great meteoric shower, Curry, who was then in his eighth year, recalled vividly in later life; associating it with what is always an occasion of vast importance in the life of a lad,—his departure from home, to attend school at a distance. He was sent from his father's home, in "The Dark Corner," to Lincolnton, where his grandmother lived; and, boarding with her, was put to school with the Reverend Mr. McKerley, the minister of what was then perhaps the sole Presbyterian church, and with a scant congregation, in the county. Mr. McKerley, if his name counts for aught, was of Galloway Scotch stock; and, after the fashion of Presbyterian ministers of that day no less than of the present, was a scholar. Under him Jabez Curry began the study of Latin,—a language whose acquisition stood him in good subsequent stead in his later career as lawyer, politician, and preacher; and which he doubtless ascertained to be of incalculable value to him in his study of the southern languages of Europe during his distinguished career as diplomat and Ambassador.

At Mr. McKerley's school, his cousin, Lafayette Lamar, was his classmate and most intimate friend; and the cordial and affectionate association between the two young lads, formed at Lincolnton, was continued and cemented in their later association at college.

During the year young Lamar's sister was married; and Curry records that the rows of iced cakes, set in the sun to dry, ere they should “furnish forth the marriage feast,” were more wonderful to his sense of interest and curiosity than had been the falling stars. They were the first iced cakes of his boyish experience. He had attended once before the nuptials of a young woman cousin; but, for some virtue of the bride, or yet other undisclosed reason, there had been no iced cakes set out to harden in the sun; and so he tells that the only thing he remembered in connection with that interesting event was that he sat upon a fence, with some other boys, and while peeling a turnip, cut his hand, making a gash, the scar of which he carried through life.

On a Saturday, during his school days at Lincolnton, in company with young Lamar and a companion named Frayser, he went into the courthouse, and with the reckless daring of youth, drew a series of figures in charcoal on the whitewashed walls of the temple of justice. His uncle, Peter Lamar, happened to come in and catch the boys in their vandal act, and scolded them severely, threatening them with confinement in jail and other condign punishment. The threat was one that suggested humiliation and terror; for Jabez had, on previous occasion, been permitted to see the inside of the county jail at Lincolnton.

Many famous names and incidents center about that old courthouse in Lincolnton. The courthouse of the frontier world, particularly in southern life, was a combination of what the theatre was to the Greeks, the forum to the Romans, the Cathedral to the mediæval world, the piazza or the market place

to the denizens of sunny lands, and the club to the dwellers in modern cities. It centered in itself and absorbed all secular interests. Excitements and thrills were to be experienced there. Ambitions were born there, ideals formed, and patriotism warmed and directed. Here the great and the near-great passed before the eyes of simple people seeking their confidence and loyalty. The church alone was strong enough to vie with the courthouse in human interest. It was the chief architectural glory of straggling villages, standing generally upon some eminence and dominating a hollow square of lesser structures devoted to trade. It is interesting and significant to note that a more practical and far-seeing generation is now substituting the schoolhouse for the courthouse as the center and pivot of community life. The transfer of interest from the one to the other in the public mind denotes a profound change in the popular conception of the meaning of politics. Politics is now coming to mean a practical program of growth and training, through which the fittest and best of all the young life about can be made ready for leadership. This attitude places the emphasis on the child who may be made great, rather than on the adult claimant of greatness, and marks a distinct advance in social understanding.

Conspicuous among the great figures of young Curry's Temple of Justice was the presiding judge of the circuit of the period of his charcoal sketch, William H. Crawford, later a man of national fame and a candidate for the presidency in 1824; Garnett Andrews, who had a local and state reputation as a lawyer and jurist; Judge Joseph H. Lumpkin, afterwards Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia,

and in his day one of the most eminent and successful lawyers at the Georgia bar; Andrew Miller, for many years president of the State Senate, a lawyer and politician of distinction; and Robert Toombs, then a young man, and afterwards a figure of conspicuous distinction in the history of the nation.

The next year young Curry was sent to school in Willington, across the Savannah River, in Abbeville County, South Carolina, whither his brother Jackson and David Remsen had preceded him the year before. The school at Willington was famous in its day. Founded in the first decade of the 19th century by the Reverend Moses Waddell, it was among the most noted of the earlier ante-bellum academies; and Waddell himself was in the forefront of the schoolmasters of his generation. It has been said of the school at Willington that “it was in the country, far from town; the life was simple and discipline was strict; the hardest work was required of all students.” Among Dr. Waddell’s pupils at various times were his famous brother-in-law, John Caldwell Calhoun; George McDuffie, “the orator of Nullification;” Judge Longstreet, of “Georgia Scenes” fame; James Bowie, soldier and adventurer, who invented the deadly knife of the southwestern country that is called after him, and who died with Crockett and Travis and their fellows in the defense of the Alamo; James Lewis Petigru, defender of the Union in the days of South Carolina nullification, attorney general of the state and codifier of its laws; and of a number of others whose names are scarcely less distinguished and well-remembered.

At the time of Curry’s attendance on the school at Willington, it was directed and taught by the sons

of the elder Waddell, James P. and John N. Waddell. There were about a hundred boys, many of whom boarded at private houses in the tiny village, and with the neighboring farmers. Young Curry's host was a Dr. Harris, who gave his company biscuits every Sunday morning, and cornbread in its various shapes on other days and times. The pupils gathered at Willington from many directions in the surrounding districts of Georgia and South Carolina; and among other contemporaries there of the two young Currys were W. W. Boyce, who was later a member of Congress from South Carolina; Gen. Milledge L. Bonham, also a member of Congress, and later Governor of South Carolina; and others of more or less local or sectional distinction.

The Willington Academy, which had been first established by Dr. Waddell at Vienna, in Carolina, a short distance from its subsequent site, has been described by one who was familiar with it, as having become famous all over the South. Says this writer:

After Dr. Waddell was forced from age and disability, to give up teaching, the school was revived by his sons, James and John Waddell, but under the general supervision of the old schoolmaster. No doubt his sons followed their father's plan of teaching, and as I was, when a boy, long an inmate of Moses Waddell's family, and a pupil at the Willington Academy, it may not be unentertaining to give a short account of the old Willington schoolhouse, as we had it from tradition. The boys boarded at farmhouses in the neighborhood or lived in log huts in the woods near the Academy, furnishing their own supplies. At sunrise Dr. Waddell was wont to wind his horn, which was immediately answered by

horns in all directions. At an early hour the pupils made their appearance at the log cabin schoolhouse. The Doctor, entering the cabin and depositing his hat, would reappear at the door with this school horn in his hand. He then would call out loud, “What boy feels most flatulent this morning?”

After the horn had been sounded by some lucky youth, the school-boys came in to listen to a short set form of prayer.

After prayers the pupils, each with a chair bearing his name sculpted in the back of it, retired to the woods for study, the classes being divided into squads according to individual preference. In the spring and summer months these squads scattered through the oak and hickory woods in quest of shade; but in cold weather the first thing done by them was to kindle log-heap fires. Whosoever imagines that the boys did not study as well as they would have done under the immediate eye of the teacher is mistaken. I have been to many schools conducted according to various systems of education, but nowhere have I seen such assiduity in study, nowhere have I ever witnessed such emulation to excel. It was a classical school. The multiplicity of studies now advertised at fashionable academies was unknown in those early times. The debating club on Friday afternoons was an important institution, and regarded by the teacher as a very necessary part of his scholastic system, for to converse and speak in public were esteemed necessary accomplishments to Southern youths.

Of the famous schoolmaster, whose sons succeeded him in the school where the methods of their father's system were still continued in Curry's day at Willington, Mr. Calhoun long afterwards wrote as follows:—

In that character (as a teacher) he stands almost unrivaled. He may be justly considered as the father of

classical education in the upper country of South Carolina and Georgia. His excellence in that character depended not so much on extensive or profound learning as a felicitous combination of qualities for the government of boys and communicating to them what he knew. He was particularly successful in exciting emulation amongst them, and in obtaining the good will of all except the worthless. The best evidence of his high qualities as a teacher is his success. Among his pupils are to be found a large portion of the eminent men in this state and Georgia. In this state it is sufficient to name McDuffie, Legaré, Petigru, and my colleague, Butler. To these many others of distinction might be added. His pupils in Georgia who have distinguished themselves are numerous. In the list are to be found the names of William H. Crawford, Longstreet, etc. It is in his character of a teacher, especially, that he will long be remembered as a benefactor of the country.

During the year of Curry's stay at Willington an event of great importance in the eyes of the pupils was the visit to the school of the famous Siamese twins, Chang and Eng, who were then making their first tour in America. He makes record among his memoranda of seeing the twins at Willington. They seemed, he says, to be about seventeen years old; and cheerful and very agile.

"Cherry Hill," the home of George McDuffie, was near the Willington Academy; and was a favorite resort of the boys on Saturdays. McDuffie's distinguished career in the United States House of Representatives ended during the year of Curry's pupilage at Willington; and in the same year he was elected Governor of South Carolina. In 1842 he was chosen to the Senate, and was in the forefront of the forensic and political debates and contests of the period in that body.

It remains to be added, in connection with Curry's life at Willington, that both the sons of Moses Waddell, James Pleasants Waddell and John Newton Waddell, became eminent in their chosen profession as educators,—the former filling with success and distinction the chairs of Latin and Greek in the University of Georgia, where Curry records of him that he treated his old pupil with a fatherly care and kindness during the latter's career as a student; while John Newton Waddell became professor of Latin and Greek in the University of Mississippi, and later its Chancellor.

During the next succeeding year, and for the two years following, from 1835 to 1838, young Curry and his brothers were kept at home, and attended a school nearby at “Double Branches.” The teacher, Daniel W. Finn, was an Irishman, and a graduate of Dublin University, where he had studied for the Roman Catholic priesthood. With such educational opportunities, Mr. Finn had made of himself a most excellent scholar; and he was highly proficient and accomplished, especially in the ancient languages. He was moreover a very popular and successful teacher; and it doubtless goes without saying that Curry, who was fond of books and usually an apt and industrious student, made satisfactory progress under the Irishman in the branches of Latin, Greek, Algebra and Geometry, in all of which the master instructed his pupil.

“Double Branches,” in the southern part of Lincoln County, was the site of a Baptist Church; and it is eminently characteristic of what might be called the “cosmopolitan” liberality of thought and breadth of view of the population of the period, had

they known aught of cities, that they not only sent their children to school to a Roman Catholic, but that they permitted a mulatto preacher to fill occasionally the pulpit of the "Double Branches" Baptist Church. This man's name was Adams; and Curry records of him that he preached to the satisfaction of all, both white and colored, and adds: "For a colored man to preach to white congregations was not an offence."

William Curry at this time was a farmer and country merchant. His store drew custom from a wide circle; and both musters and elections were held in its immediate vicinity. Politics ran high in those days, in Lincoln County as elsewhere; and carried inevitably in their train frequent excitement and ill-feeling. But the Lincoln County folks took their politics, as they did the other happenings of life, with a philosophic good humor which did not suffer the sun to go down on their political wrath; and the asperities of election day generally disappeared in the emulation of the quarter-races, which almost invariably succeeded the polling, the electors riding, in competition, quick heats on the nags that had brought them to the store for the purpose of voting.

In the country sports, common to boys and men, young Jabez Curry took his hearty share. The hunting of the opossum and the 'coon, an immemorial pastime and delight with many generations of Southern boys and their darkey friends and playmates, and embalmed in the melody and pathos of more than one plantation song, was a favorite pursuit with Jabez. "Very often," he says, "have I, with other boys and some of my father's negroes, hunted for half the night. It was a boyish ambition,

too, to be out all night. The skill of the negroes in finding their way in the woods by starlight used to excite my boyish admiration.”

It was such association as this with the young people of the slave population that gave their white owners so strong a hold upon the natural affections of the negroes; and no one can fully realize and appreciate the reciprocal feelings of kindness and regard that held the two races of that period so strongly together, who has never been 'possum or 'coon hunting on a Southern plantation at night, with a company of dusky negro playmates!

Hunting birds, too, in the brush heaps of the “new grounds,” where the virgin forests had fallen before the axe, and the logs had been piled up to be removed or burnt, was also an exciting sport, with its accompaniment of flashing pine torches and whistling dogwood branches; but the helplessness of the victims, and their easy capture or destruction when blinded by the torchlight, and stricken down by the switches, gave it a cruel aspect to young Curry, who preferred other and less easy pursuits. A rabbit-hunt was a good thing, for bunny had a chance to get away; and fishing with hook and line in river and creek, or hauling the seine in the mill-ponds, offered many opportunities of enjoyment to the growing lad. “I well remember,” he declared in after years, with the vivid recollection in which childhood often preserves its simplest memories—“I well remember the first fish—a little minnow—I ever caught; and Napoleon was not prouder of one of his great victories than I was of my piscatory success.”

It is a characteristic of the negro race, familiar to

those who have associated with them in more than one of the Southern States, that the farther south they live, and the nearer to the equator, the more amenable they appear to the impressions of superstition. Superstitious under the most favorable circumstances, the negro of the far south is voodooistic and "conjur-man" to an extreme degree; and James Whitcomb Riley's lines convey no inapt description of him amid his surroundings:—

Amid lush fens of rice,
I beheld the negro's eyes
Lit with that old superstition time itself cannot disguise;
And I saw the palm-tree nod
Like an oriental god,
And the cotton froth and bubble at the pod.

There were no palm trees nor rice in the part of Georgia where Jabez Curry grew up as a child; but the negro was there with his immemorial self-delusions and gross beliefs. Curry has left a grave record of the evil results which this strange quality of the African mind made upon his own in early childhood—an experience that was common to very many of the sensitive and imaginative white children of the South:—

"The negroes, a superstitious, gullible race," he writes, "used to tell me most marvellous tales about ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, and haunted places; and I had not a shadow of doubt as to the truth of their statement. The result on myself was so painful and mischievous, that I made it an inflexible rule in training my children to deal frankly with them, and under no circumstances to deceive them."

CHAPTER II

ALABAMA: "HERE WE REST"

IN the year 1837, Curry's father visited Alabama, and bought a tract of land in Talladega County, known as Kelly's Springs. It was the period of the "Flush Times of Mississippi and Alabama," whose history has been chronicled with the deft and illuminating pen of Judge Joseph G. Baldwin. In the public estimation, there were great fortunes to be made from the acquisition of lands. "Fiat money" of the irresponsible state banks, and the "shin-plaster" currency of a wild economic period in the history of the lower South, abounded everywhere; and speculation was rife. William Curry paid thirty-nine dollars per acre for his Talladega farm; and in spite of the later fading of the "Flush Times" and the collapse of the "boom" in land values, he presumably never had cause to regret his purchase. In December of the same year, or in January of the next, he sent his negroes, in charge of an overseer, to Kelly's Springs, to prepare the ground and put out a crop. He sold the old home place in "The Dark Corner," and in May, 1838, set out with his family for his new home in Alabama. Though thus parting finally with the residence and family graveyard of his people in Lincoln County, which passed thenceforward into the hands of strangers, William Curry

appears to have retained considerable landed estate in Georgia, for he owned not only a large body of land in Lincoln County, but a number of other tracts and lots in various parts of the state,—illustrating in its acquisition and retention one of the most marked characteristics, as philosophic historians remind us, of the genuine Anglo-Saxon, whether as an individual, or in the aggregate as a race.

The starting to Alabama was delayed by the extreme illness of young Curry's stepmother; and the journey was made by Mrs. Curry in a carriage.

In 1802 Georgia, in emulation of the generous and splendid act of Virginia in ceding to the United States the great Northwest Territory, had ceded to the general government the region which became in 1817 the territory of Alabama, and two years later was admitted into the Union as a state. The act by which this cession was made provided that the terms and conditions of the Ordinance of 1787 governing the Northwest Territory should apply, except the provision in the latter as to slavery. The act of Congress, authorizing the people of Alabama to form a state government, contained like provisions, and specified that the constitution of the new state should be in accordance with the Ordinance save as to the slavery provision. It also contained provision for certain land grants dedicated to education and internal improvements.

It has been said of the Convention which met at Huntsville, on July 5, 1819, and continued in session until August 2, that it was an able body of men, many of whom had gained political experience in the older states; and that "it is possible to trace in the document which they drew up the influence of

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Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, North and South Carolina ideas; yet the document was not a slavish one. It was a good, practical constitution, and it lasted with several small amendments down to the War of Secession."

Alabama became one of the states of the American Union, December 14, 1819; so that its statehood was but a little more than five years of age at the date of Curry's birth in 1825. When he became its citizen in 1838, both state and boy were young; and thenceforward they grew up and developed together until War arose on the horizon, and a new government claimed and received the allegiance of both.

At the time of William Curry's migration with his family from Lincoln County, Georgia, to Talladega, Alabama, the new state was such a frontier country as the Georgia of a preceding generation had been. The historian, above quoted, says of it:—

The conquest of nature absorbed the inhabitants of the new state so fully that they had little time for political questions; nor did these for some time press upon them for solution. The new state began its career in the "Era of Good Feeling," under President Monroe. The bitter Missouri contest was contemporaneous with its admission, and during the years of political quiet that followed, Alabama knew no politics. The population was nearly half slave; but the conditions were favorable to slavery, and there was little difference of opinion about it. Laws were passed to regulate the institution, to prevent cruelty on the one hand and wholesale emancipation on the other, to prescribe the status of free negroes, and to maintain order among the slaves and the free. The question then passed into the background, where it slumbered, with one or two brief interruptions, until it was called forth by the great discussions that immediately preceded the War.

The distance which was traversed by the Curry family in going from "The Dark Corner" to their new home at Kelly's Springs was more than two hundred miles. The way stretched entirely across the State of Georgia and a third of the way across the State of Alabama. It was no slight or trivial journey, for the way was largely unbroken, and the means of locomotion primitive. The cavalcade was composed of the white family in vehicles or on horseback, the carriage in which Mrs. Curry was transported, various wagons and horses, the latter hitched to the vehicles, or ridden under saddle, and numerous negro household servants. A necessary part of its equipment was a sufficient supply of tents, for there was neither inn nor hostelry for the accommodation of man or beast. But the May weather was mild and balmy; and camping-out under a cloudless heaven, beneath the overhanging stars, afforded the lad a new joy, the memory of which lasted through his life. The wolves, attracted by the camp-fires which the servants built at night, approached the camp, and protested against the invasion of their territory with doleful howls; but the fears which they aroused in the minds of the youthful members of the party were accompanied by such a sense of excitement and interest as to make them not unwelcome. At a point where the little cavalcade crossed the Georgia line into what is now Cleburne County, Alabama, young Curry got his first sight of the mountains. Though they were neither lofty nor commanding, they presented to his view a novel and unexperienced landscape; and in traversing them he examined with keen interest the grasses, shrubs and ferns with which they were

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covered. A long familiarity in after years with the mountains of his native country, and with the Pyrenees, the Alps and the Apennines of the old world, never obliterated from his memory that early impression of the low mountains of the Georgian border.

"It was a sad exodus," he wrote, more than half a century later, in allusion to a visit some years before to the old place in Lincoln County, "leaving the old homestead, where grandparents and mother lay buried. Many years afterwards I revisited my birthplace, but what a change! When my father emigrated, he left a mansion, all needful outhouses, a grove of beautiful oaks, a fertilized vegetable garden, a yard glowing with roses and rare flowers, well-bearing orchards of selected fruits, a plantation well-fenced and intersected by roads, and everything that characterized a well-to-do Southern home. Forty-six years had wrought a marvellous transformation. Nearly everything on the surface had disappeared, except the dwelling-house, and that was in a dilapidated condition. The cultivated fields had been neglected and permitted to grow up in broom sedge and sassafras and persimmon and pine. Desolation reigned supreme. I came away sick at heart, regretting that I had made the visit, for all the cherished pictures of childhood's life were dispelled, and there only remained the saddest impression of what neglect and poverty and bad tillage had wrought."

The new home in Talladega County was reached May 29, 1838, and the new life begun. The negroes, who had come on before the family, had been industriously at work, and had done their work well. The new lands had responded to the efforts of their cultivators; the corn, that had been planted in the early spring, was already waist-high; and nature's

lavish gifts were everywhere in evidence. The woods were covered with verdant and luxuriant foliage; grapes hung from the branches of trailing vines, and wild flowers blossomed in wood and wold. The water in the streams, flowing amid limestone rocks, was clear as crystal; and the whole new country seemed to the impressionable boy the most beautiful he had ever imagined.

The newcomers found that the dwelling house was not completed. It was a two-story building of ample proportions, yet in its unfinished state it afforded only scanty shelter. But the season was mild, and the tents that had been pitched by the wayside were not without their uses at the goal. The kindly welcome which the negro slaves gave the newcomers made no little amends for many temporary discomforts. They were at work in the fields by the roadside as the cavalcade from Georgia approached; and throwing down their hoes, they rushed to meet their master's family with the joyous and noisy greeting of a careless race.

The nomenclature of places is often as interesting and as significant as that of peoples and individuals; and not infrequently establishes historical landmarks that ought not to be changed or removed. Contact with the Indians, of which the new state had up to very recent times been full, had impressed the incoming white settlers with the frequent appositeness and significance of the Indian names; and many of them were retained for the places and localities to which they had become attached. "Alabama" itself meant "Here we rest;" and was no inappropriate appellation for the new region in the eyes of the incomers. "Talladega" meant "Border Town;" and

the white settlers retained it. It was a fertile spot, this Talladega Valley, constituting the eastern part of the great Coosa Valley; and a land that lent itself rather to the cultivation of the cereals than of cotton. It had been the country of the Muscogee Indians, later better known as Creeks. The Creek Indians in the War of 1812, as the Five Nations in the North during the Revolution, had espoused the cause of the invading British against the local white man. These Creeks had committed the atrocious massacre at Fort Mims; and it was not until General Andrew Jackson had vanquished them in the battle of the Horseshoe Bend, and finally by treaty restricted them to the Coosa Valley section, that they had been under control. When William Curry's family arrived at Kelly's Springs, in Talladega County, in 1838, the Indians had for the most part passed out of Alabama, Cherokees, Chickasaws and Choctaws going first; and the warlike Creeks only departing at last, after a last stand and struggle at Pea Ridge in the preceding year.

Though most of the Indians had long since departed from Alabama, and had crossed over into the country west of the Mississippi River, a few continued to stay in their old country, earning a precarious subsistence by hunting, fishing and begging. Several of them were at the new home at Kelly's Springs when the Currys arrived; and Curry records of them that they were for a long time thereafter to be seen at the place nearly every day. They were poor and harmless and friendless; and he became quite fond of them, and soon learned to speak their language so as to converse with them in it. But he writes regretfully that their general worthlessness soon dis-